

POINT OF NO RETURN

CAST

Ex-students:

Jade.....late teens
Dean.....late teens
Mental.....late teens
Carl.....late teens
Jess.....late teens
Misha.....late teens
Leanne.....late teens

Younger versions + class-mates:

Young Jade.....13-14
Young Dean.....13-14
Young Mental.....13-14
Young Carl.....13-14
Young Jess.....13-14
Young Misha.....13-14
Young Leanne.....13-14
Harry.....13-14
Toby.....13-14
Keeley.....13-14
Lee.....13-14
Imogen.....13-14
Ella.....13-14
Holly.....13-14

Yr7s:

Janie.....11
Izzy.....11

Ghost students:

Annie.....13
Tilda.....11-12
Nina.....11-12
Gemma.....11-12
Lisa.....11-12
Naomi.....11-12

SCENE 1

Derelict school building. Semi-darkness. Jade, Jess, Misha, Leanne, Dean, Mental and Carl enter, all a bit drunk, Jess unwell.

JADE

Oh, my God, Misha, look at this, do you remember? Oh my God-

DEAN

Wicked-

MENTAL

We got to burn it down!

CARL

Chill, brother. You're phasing me with your negative energy waves.

MENTAL

But we've got to!

CARL

Later, brother. Let's just imbibe the holy atmosphere. Then we'll burn it down.

JADE

That's where I sat. I bet it says Jade on the desk. I bet it's the same desk.

DEAN

(to Misha)

Where'd you get the key from?

MISHA

Bluey.

DEAN

Who's Bluey?

MENTAL

Bluey, Hughie, Louie!

MISHA

Bluey's in love with me.

LEANNE

Who *is* he?

MISHA

You know Bluey. The security guard. I see him in town. He just stares at me. I could make him do anything. He'd get the sack if they found out. He's like a little dog. It's like, he's panting. They're all in love with me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JADE

Do you remember old Perkins? Year nine.
Red for rulers. Green for glue.

MENTAL

Red for rulers, green for glue! Red for
rulers, green for glue!

CARL

Have you been sniffing some green?

DEAN

Perkins was a zombie.

JADE

He was a creep.

CARL

He had issues. His soul was unhappy.

JADE

He was like a creepy robot. When he
walked. Do you remember? Dean, do you
remember?

DEAN

*(looking in and under the
desk)*

Course I remember. Look - there's stuff
here. Look.

JESS

*(holding her tummy and
shivering)*

It's cold in here.

CARL

It's wicked.

LEANNE

Are you still feeling sick?

JESS

I'm cold.

MENTAL

Let's set fire to it! That'll warm you
up.

DEAN

(reading)

"English Module B, year one, section A,
Love and Revenge in Shakespeare's Romeo
and Juliet and Macbeth". We should
definitely set fire to this.

LEANNE

Can't we have some lights on?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JESS

I don't think we should.

JADE

They'll have cut it off. The electricity.

LEANNE

They might not have. The workmen need it, don't they. Before they pull it down. They're still doing stuff.

JADE

Well how do we turn it on?

DEAN

There's a fuse-box. In the store-cupboard.

JADE

Go on, then. If you're so clever.

DEAN

(to Mental)

Come on.

Dean and Mental exit.

CARL

(to Leanne)

Sort of romantic, isn't it. Don't you think?

LEANNE

No.

CARL

All, like dark and broken. Kind of sad in a beautiful way.

LEANNE

Shut up Carl.

CARL

You're a strong lady, has anyone told you?

JESS

I feel all shivery.

MISHA

Are you going to moan all night?

JADE

She drank too much at the club. She can't hold it, can you little Jessie?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MISHA

(to Jade)

Why did you bring her? All she does is moan.

(to Jess)

Why don't you stop moaning?

JESS

I'm only-

MISHA

It makes me bored, listening to you moan.

JADE

Do you want a can? I've got four.

MISHA

Is that all?

JADE

I drank the others.

MISHA

Alky. Go on, then.

(referring to Jess)

We'll have to send her out to get some more.

JESS

I'm not old enough.

JADE

She needs i.d., here take my sister's-

MISHA

She doesn't need i.d., she looks older than my auntie. Go to the Spar, tell them it's for Misha.

JESS

I don't want to go on my own.

DEAN

(from off)

Are you ready? We're going to try the switch.

JESS

What if someone sees the lights? What if the police come?

MISHA

You'll probably wet your pants.

JESS

But we'll get into trouble.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MISHA

(to Jade)

Oh dear. That would be terrible,
wouldn't it.

DEAN

Did you hear me?

CARL

Let there be light!

Stage lights suddenly come on.

CARL (cont'd)

And there *was* light. And God saw the
light and saw that it was good.

MENTAL

(entering)

What's that all about?

CARL

It's from the Holy Bible. It's a very
beautiful book.

MENTAL

How do you know all that?

DEAN

(entering)

Because he's got a brain.

MENTAL

What's one of them?

DEAN

It's filthy in that cupboard. It
stinks.

MENTAL

Oi, Deany Weany with the teeny peeny.
Give us a fag.

DEAN

I ain't got none.

MENTAL

You said you had some.

DEAN

Well I ain't.

MENTAL

But you said.

DEAN

No I didn't.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MENTAL

Yes you did.

DEAN

When?

MENTAL

Before.

DEAN

When before?

MENTAL

I don't know! Before! You *said!*

CARL

Peace, brothers.

DEAN

(to Mental)

Ain't you got any?

MENTAL

Course I ain't. You said you had some.

DEAN

(to Carl)

What about you?

CARL

*(taking out a packet of
cigarettes)*In the name of peace, partake of the
weed.*Dean bends down and picks up a ventolin spacer.*

DEAN

What's this?

MENTAL

What?

Dean holds it up. Pause.

DEAN

Didn't that kid have one?

MENTAL

What kid?

DEAN

When we were in year nine, or
something, I can't remember.

MENTAL

What kid?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DEAN
You know-

MISHA
Give it to me.

DEAN
Hold on-

MISHA
(violently)
Give it to me, now! I said now!

Pause. Dean passes it to her. She stares at it.

DEAN
Calm down.

MISHA
(quiet)
The Thane of fife had a wife: where is she now?

JADE
Misha?-

MISHA
What, will these hands never be clean?

DEAN
Is she all right?

MISHA
What's done cannot be undone.

The lights flick off. Darkness, except for phone-torches.

MENTAL
Oi!

JESS
What's happened?

MENTAL
The thingy must have blown.

DEAN
The fuse.

MENTAL
The fuse.
(to Dean)
I thought you were meant to be clever.

DEAN
I am clever.
(to Mental)
Come on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dean and Mental leave. Carl lights a cigarette. Pause.

JADE
(calling to Dean)
 What's the matter with it?

DEAN
(from off)
 How should I know? It's all dark.

CARL
 Use your phone.

DEAN
 I *am*. It's not exactly a spotlight.

JADE
 We're going to have to give you the sack.

DEAN
 Ask me how much I care.

JESS
(to Leanne)
 Let's go. I want to go.

JADE
 Why? We've got torches, we've got phones. Carl's right. It's nice. It's atmospheric. Misha? You all right?

Misha ignores her.

DEAN
 I don't understand it, the switch is still on. It hasn't tripped out.

The torch goes off. Complete darkness.

JADE
 You're kidding me.

JESS
(panicking)
 Turn it back on.

JADE
 I can't, it's broken.

DEAN
 My phone don't work.

Misha gets her phone out.

MISHA
(to Jade)
 Get your phone out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JADE
It's not working.

LEANNE
Mine's not, either.

JADE
What's going on. Carl? Is your phone working?

CARL
I haven't got a phone. They microwave your brain. Bad waves.

DEAN
I can't see what I'm doing.

The lights suddenly flick back on. Beat. All around them are statuary children in hideous, overly tragic masks. Everyone else, except Misha, freezes.

MISHA
(to herself)
He's right.

Beat. The lights go off again.

MISHA (cont'd)
Get out of here! Get out!

Misha runs to exit in the darkness.

MISHA (cont'd)
(shouting)
The door's locked! It's locked! This is just... this is stupid, someone's having a joke! Jade! Jess! Leanne! Why are you just standing there? Someone's locked us in with these...

Spooky lights up. Underscore. Misha is on her own holding the spacer with the figures standing very near to her. They reach out to her. Lights fade over the speech, leaving Misha in a spot-light.

ANNIE
(amplified)
We're the ones that are stuck here. Other children leave school and grow-up. We stay behind. Even if you see us, older, outside in the world, with families, jobs, we're still here.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNIE (cont'd)

Even when this building's been pulled down, and all the broken bricks and all the dust and all the ancient hidden crisp packets and report cards and worksheets have been taken away in big lorries, and even when the ground's been covered over with gravel and soil and grass, and even when the grass is mown and children younger than us are playing football on a sunny day and everyone's forgotten that a building was ever here, with noise and shouting and smells and rushing feet, we'll still be here. We'll always be here. We're the one's that never leave. We're stuck here.

Underscore stops abruptly. Misha is alone.

MISHA

Hello?

Pause

MISHA (cont'd)

(a whisper)

Harry?

Pause. A younger child (Young Misha) appears behind Misha. She spins round and sees her.

MISHA (cont'd)

Who are you?

Pause

MISHA (cont'd)

I said who-

HEAD-TEACHER'S VOICE

(V.O.)

You must be Misha.

MISHA

(wheeling round, looking up)

What?

HEAD-TEACHER'S VOICE

(V.O.)

The new girl. It *is* Misha, isn't it?

YOUNG MISHA

Yes.

MISHA

Yes.

Misha looks at young Misha.

MISHA

Who are ... who's-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HEAD-TEACHER'S VOICE

I thought I didn't recognise you. Are you lost? It's a big place, isn't it? Must feel a bit odd, first day at a new school.

YOUNG MISHA

Yes.

MISHA

Who are you talking to? What's going on?

HEAD-TEACHER'S VOICE

You'll settle in no time. In fact there's someone else starting today as well, so you won't be on your own. There's nothing to worry about, really.

YOUNG MISHA

I'm not worried.

HEAD-TEACHER'S VOICE

Great. Good to hear. Do you know the name of your form tutor?

YOUNG MISHA

Mr. Perkins.

Misha stares at young Misha.

HEAD-TEACHER'S VOICE

Mr. Perkins, good for you. You'll get on fine with him. He's along the the main corridor in B block. Tell you what, there's another new pupil starting in the same class as you today, so why don't you wait for him in the main office, and I'll make sure Mr. Perkins leads you across when he collects the register. You know where the main office is, don't you.

Misha and young Misha look at each other. Pause.

YOUNG MISHA

Yes sir.

MISHA

Yes sir.

HEAD-TEACHER'S VOICE

(cont'd)

Excellent. You'll have a great time here. We're all friendly. No one bites.

Young Misha runs out.

SCENE 2

The set changes from dereliction to normal. As this happens Misha disappears and Jade, Jess, Leanne, Dean, Carl and Mental appear at the back. Their younger selves replace them and they (the older ones) in turn disappear. Other children enter (including Harry). Chaos of lockers, bags, kids rushing to and fro, shouting etc, school-noise underscore. Toby enters. He tries talking to children who ignore him.

TOBY

Excuse me...

Pause

TOBY (cont'd)

Excuse me where's the office?

Pause

TOBY (cont'd)

Excuse me...

Janie and Izzy go past.

TOBY (cont'd)

Excuse me, where's the office?

JANIE

Between temporary A and the main block.

TOBY

What?

JANIE

It's a pre-fab. It's yellow.

(pointing)

Round there.

TOBY

Where?

IZZY

Are you new?

TOBY

What?

JANIE

Are you a new boy?

TOBY

Yes.

IZZY

(to Janie)

Told you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANIE
You did not.

IZZY
I did.

JANIE
You didn't tell me anything.

IZZY
Yes I did, I said I bet he's new.

JANIE
No, you didn't.

IZZY
I did!

JANIE
Well I never heard.

IZZY
Well that's cos you weren't listening.

JANIE
You didn't say it loud enough.

IZZY
Yes I did-

JANIE
No you didn't, otherwise I would have heard. I'm not deaf.

IZZY
You must be.

JANIE
You just can't talk properly.

IZZY
Yes I can-

TOBY
Excuse me-

IZZY
I said it really clearly.

JANIE
You didn't-

IZZY
I did-

JANIE
You probably said it to somebody else.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IZZY

I didn't-

JANIE

Or you whispered it.

TOBY

Excuse me-

IZZY

Why would I whisper it?

TOBY

Excuse me, where did you say it was?

Pause

JANIE

What?

TOBY

Where did you say it was?

JANIE

Where did I say what was?

TOBY

The office.

JANIE

Between temporary A and the main block.
I just told you. Are you deaf?*Janie and Izzy leave.*

TOBY

But I don't know where that is...
Excuse me...*The set becomes a class-room. Class-group pile in. Quieten down, empty bags, take out books, slump down etc. Two empty chairs at the front. Young Jade and Young Jess enter together. They sit down. Harry approaches.*

HARRY

Hi Jade.

YOUNG JADE

Hi, Harry.

HARRY

Did you... did you do the home-work?
For Greavesie.

YOUNG JADE

Er, yeah.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HARRY

Right. It was quite... did you think it was hard?

YOUNG JADE

Not really.

HARRY

Right, no... quite easy wasn't it.

YOUNG CARL

Have you heard?

LEE

What?

YOUNG CARL

There's two new kids coming. Boy and a girl.

YOUNG JESS

Be still my beating heart. Or I shall surely die of excitement.

YOUNG CARL

Where do you get all that from?

YOUNG JESS

All what?

YOUNG CARL

What you just said.

YOUNG JESS

From my extremely large brain.

YOUNG CARL

Oh, right.

YOUNG DEAN

Bags they don't sit next to me. New kids always smell.

KEELEY

You smell.

YOUNG DEAN

Shut up.

KEELEY

I mean like really. Not just a little bit. You know, like a lot.

YOUNG DEAN

Yeah, yeah.

LEE

It's testosterone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

YOUNG MENTAL

What's that?

LEE

The smell of power.

YOUNG DEAN

Right.

YOUNG JESS

Fancy you knowing a word as long as that.

YOUNG MENTAL

What is it?

IMOGEN

I don't want any new girl sitting next to me.

YOUNG CARL

We should be friendly. Peace and love.

LEE

We should cook them and eat them. With a little white wine.

YOUNG MENTAL

(to Lee)

What does that word mean? The one you said.

ELLA

I don't mind someone new sitting next to me.

IMOGEN

Goody-goody.

ELLA

I'm not a goody-goody.

LEE

What if they were mad?

KEELEY

What if they had leprosy?

YOUNG MENTAL

What's leprosy?

LEE

Or the bubonic plague-

YOUNG MENTAL

The what?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IMOGEN

What if they couldn't stop farting?

YOUNG DEAN

(standing and straining)

You mean, like this?

WHOLE CLASS

Uughh!

YOUNG DEAN

Thank you, thank you.

HOLLY

Not again!-

LEE

I can't breathe!-

ELLA

You're disgusting.

YOUNG DEAN

Thank you. It's a gift.

ELLA

It's revolting.

YOUNG MENTAL

The what plague?

HOLLY

Can someone open a window?

IMOGEN

Can someone kill Dean?

YOUNG MENTAL

I'll do it. I'm good with my hands.

(to Holly)

Have you seen how big my hands are?

HOLLY

Go away.

YOUNG MENTAL

But I love you.

HOLLY

I said go away. You disturb me.

YOUNG MENTAL

Excellent. How do I do that?

IMOGEN

It's because you're ugly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

YOUNG MENTAL
She just called me ugly.

YOUNG DEAN
You *are* ugly.

YOUNG JESS
Ugly in a special, interesting way.

ELLA
(*to young Dean*)
Not as ugly as you.

YOUNG DEAN
I'm not ugly.

YOUNG LEANNE
All boys are ugly.

YOUNG DEAN
Who's uglier, me or Mental?

YOUNG JESS
You're both as ugly as each other.
You're both cretinous, ugly and smelly.

YOUNG CARL
I love it when you talk intelligent.
Say it all again. What was that word?

YOUNG JESS
Cretinous.

YOUNG CARL
Say it again. Say it in French.

YOUNG JESS
You're very sad. Sad and lonely.

LEE
Am I ugly then?

KEELEY
You're super ugly.

LEE
I'm super ugly!

YOUNG CARL
Well done my friend. Join the ugly club.
(*to Young Jess*)
It must be difficult for you, having to be in the same room as us.

YOUNG JESS
It's worse than death. Thank God there's not many of you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

YOUNG DEAN

There'll be one more in a minute.

ELLA

And one more girl. So the balance stays
the same.

YOUNG CARL

She's a genius as well.

YOUNG JESS

We all are. Fragrant, beautiful and
brilliant. You're lucky to spend time
in our company.

YOUNG LEANNE

I think they should worship us.

IMOGEN

Yes!

KEELEY

On their knees.

YOUNG LEANNE

Every half an hour.

YOUNG JESS

And bring us grapes.

ELLA

And chocolate.

YOUNG LEANNE

Lots of chocolate.

HOLLY

And sweets!

IMOGEN

As many as we say.

HOLLY

Whenever we want.

IMOGEN

And kiss our feet.

Pause

IMOGEN (cont'd)

Well, maybe not kiss our feet.

YOUNG CARL

Sounds fair enough.

He gets on his knees on a table.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

YOUNG CARL (cont'd)

(in a chanting voice)

Oh, great Goddesses of woman-kind, we
 worship you! Even though you are
 rubbish at football and scream when you
 see a spider and talk in your funny,
 nyer-nyer-nyer little voices, and spend
 your life looking in mirrors-

ELLA

We do not!

YOUNG CARL

We worship you! Come on Mental, Dean,
 we're meant to be worshipping them.
 Lee, get on your knees. Harry! Harry!

HARRY

What?

YOUNG CARL

We're worshipping the ladies.

HARRY

I know. I mean... I know.

YOUNG CARL

Well come on then.

*The boys all join Young Carl on their knees, and join in with
 ridiculous chanting. The girls notice the arrival of the
 teacher. The class gradually goes quiet leaving Young Carl on
 his own. Misha and Toby enter.*

TEACHER'S VOICE

Good morning Carl.

*Carl looks up, and quickly sits down. The class settles. The
 children look up to quite a high point.*

TEACHER'S VOICE (cont'd)

Good morning everyone.

WHOLE CLASS

Good morning, sir.

TEACHER'S VOICE

I'd like to introduce you to two new
 pupils. This is Misha, and this is
 Toby. It goes without saying that I
 expect you to make them feel as welcome
 as possible. I tell you what, why don't
 you sit next to Harry, Toby, just here,
 at the front, and Misha, why don't you
 come and sit next to Jade.

*Young Misha and Toby sit down, Toby between Harry and Jade, and
 Misha between Jade and Jess.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

 TOBY
 (putting his hand up)
 Sir?

 TEACHER'S VOICE
 Yes, Toby.

 TOBY
 (reaching into his bag)
 My mum said I should give you this.

He takes out a spacer for an inhaler. Slight reaction from the class.

 TEACHER'S VOICE
 What's that?

 TOBY
 It's my spacer. For my ventolin. In case I have an asthma attack.

 TEACHER'S VOICE
 Oh, I see. Of course. Come and put it on the table.

Toby does so.

 TEACHER'S VOICE (cont'd)
 So. Register. Dean.

 YOUNG DEAN
 Sir.

 TEACHER'S VOICE
 Carl.

 YOUNG CARL
 Sir.

 TEACHER'S VOICE
 Imogen.

 IMOGEN
 Sir.

 TEACHER'S VOICE
 Lee.

 LEE
 Sir.

 TEACHER'S VOICE
 Ella.

 ELLA
 Sir.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Holly. TEACHER'S VOICE

Sir. HOLLY

Leanne. TEACHER'S VOICE

Sir. YOUNG LEANNE

Keeley. TEACHER'S VOICE

Sir. KEELEY

The teacher's voice fades and we hear voice-overs as a spot light picks out each child.

YOUNG CARL'S VOICE
What was that thing? Did he say
"spacer"?

YOUNG DEAN'S VOICE
Space cadet-

YOUNG MENTAL'S VOICE
Space-man-

LEE'S VOICE
Spaced-out-

YOUNG CARL'S VOICE
Space-brain-

KEELEY'S VOICE
Space-face-

IMOGEN'S VOICE
Alien-

YOUNG CARL'S VOICE
Klingon-

YOUNG MISHA
(out loud)
Buzz Lightyear.

BUZZ FROM FILM
To infinity and beyond!

Class laugh.

TEACHER'S VOICE
So if we're all ready to listen... I
said if we're all ready to listen...
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TEACHER'S VOICE (cont'd)

I *said*, if we're *all* ready to *listen*.
Prepare for the joy that is friday
morning English.

(*voice fading into white-
noise*)

I'd like you to open your work-books
and write down the heading that's on
the white-board. Everybody see it?
"Love and Revenge in Shakespeare's
Romeo and Juliet and Macbeth". Your
work books are the large green ones,
which need to be covered in protective
plastic if you haven't done so already,
Dean, Lee, Carl. Start at the top left-
hand corner using either a pencil or an
ink pen, if you haven't yet got an ink-
pen you can go to Mrs. Berman's office
at break to get a form, the rulers are
in the red holders and should always be
returned to the red holders, each table
should have four, if there aren't
enough take it in turns, and replace
the rulers immediately in the red
holders, not the green holders Michael
because those are for glue, that's
right Lisa, and there should be four
pots of glue in the green holders, same
as for the rulers in the red holders,
red for rulers, green for glue, you'll
notice how the contents of each holder
in question begins with same letter as
the holder itself...

*The teacher's voice fades and the white noise increases. Torch-
light picks out individual children in the class. As it does,
they look up and their thoughts are heard "tuning in" through
the teacher's noise.*

YOUNG LEANNE'S VOICE

I think I might paint my nails blue.

YOUNG DEAN'S VOICE

I really hope it's shepherd's pie for
lunch.

YOUNG MENTAL'S VOICE

(*rocky underscore*)

I wonder how big my muscles will be
when I'm older.

IMOGEN'S VOICE

I can't believe Leanne's got a new
mobile. It's so unfair! I'm way older
than her.

ELLA'S VOICE

I can't believe Imogen called me a
goody-goody. I'm not a goody-goody.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KEELEY'S VOICE

I can't believe Mental's so thick. No one can be that thick.

YOUNG CARL'S VOICE

(exciting film score under)

This is red leader! This is red leader! My port engine's on fire!

YOUNG JESS' VOICE

This class is so boring. I wonder if Jade has noticed that Harry has been staring at her like a moron all morning. I better tell her about the cinema tickets, before he does something stupid, like ask her out. That new girl looks a bit... I don't know... she doesn't smile. She doesn't look nervous. I'd be nervous, on my first day.

HARRY'S VOICE

(romantic underscore, while Harry looks at Jade)

She's so pretty. I can never talk to her. I always say something stupid. Why do I do that? What's wrong with me? Oh my God she's looking at me! Oh, no! She caught me looking at her! She'll think I'm a pervert!

YOUNG JADE'S VOICE

Harry's been looking at me non-stop since I came in. Does he fancy me? He can't fancy me. Have I got something on my face? Have I got food stuck in my teeth? Was he smiling? Was he laughing at me?

HARRY'S VOICE

I'm dead. It's all over. I'll just have to kill myself. I'll write a suicide note. After I'm dead she'll find a picture of me and fall in love with my memory. That'll serve her right.

(Harry looking at Toby)

Why does the new kid have to sit between me and Jade? What's that stupid thing he gave to the teacher? His spacer? I don't want him to sit next to me.

TOBY'S VOICE

(Toby looking at Harry)

Harry looks nice. I wonder if he'll be friends with me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

YOUNG LEANNE'S VOICE

Actually, maybe I'll paint them green.
No, red. No, green... Black.
Definitely. Yeah, black. I think.

The white noise stops.

TEACHER'S VOICE

Right, if you're all ready. As I recall
I asked you all to learn a speech for
your home-work. Who wants to have a
shot at it?

All the girls put up their hands.

TEACHER'S VOICE (cont'd)

Harry?

HARRY

Sir?

TEACHER'S VOICE

Why don't you have a go at the speech I
asked you to learn.

HARRY

What, me?

TEACHER'S VOICE

Yes, you Harry.

HARRY

The... the speech-

TEACHER'S VOICE

From Romeo and Juliet. The one I asked
you all to learn. Shakespeare. For your
home-work. Come on, let's have you
standing up.

*Catcalls from the class. Then a freeze. Underscore. A light
picks out Jade. Harry stares at her.*

HARRY'S VOICE

But soft, what light at yonder window
breaks?
It is the east and Juliet is the sun!
Arise fair sun and kill the envious
moon
Who is already sick and pale with grief
That thou her maid art far more fair
than she.
It is my lady, it is my love.
O that she knew she were!
See how she leans her cheek upon her
hand.
O that I were a glove upon that hand,
That I might touch that cheek-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Underscore stops.

TEACHER'S VOICE
Whenever you're ready, Harry.

HARRY
I... I can't remember it, sir.

TEACHER'S VOICE
Didn't you learn it? I asked you learn it. It was your homework, wasn't it, Harry.

HARRY
I tried, sir.

TEACHER'S VOICE
Not hard enough.

HARRY
Sorry, sir.

TEACHER'S VOICE
Write it out for me five times over the weekend. And you can stay behind and do lunch-time duty.

The bell rings. Children start packing up. Toby and Young Misha wait. Harry stands still. Then goes to Young Jade.

HARRY
Jade? Jade?

YOUNG JADE
What?

HARRY
Shall I... Shall I... see you at-

TEACHER'S VOICE
Harry Woodman. Tables and chairs. Not chatting with your girl-friend.

Catcalls.

HARRY
She's not my-

YOUNG JADE
I'm not his-

TEACHER'S VOICE (cont'd)
Make sure you do it properly, Harry. Quietly as you leave, the rest of you.

The children leave.

HARRY
(to Jade)
I'll see you later, shall I?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Pause. Harry stacks chairs and tables. Toby watches.

 TOBY
Do you want a hand?

 HARRY
What? No, it's all right.

Pause

 TOBY
You sure?-

 HARRY
Yeah. Thanks.

Pause

 TOBY
What's your favourite football team?

 HARRY
I dunno, don't have one.

 TOBY
Mine's Manchester United.

 HARRY
Right.

 TOBY
I saw them play, once. Last year. My
Dad took me.

 HARRY
Right.

 TOBY
They beat Chelsea two nil. It was a
league match.

 HARRY
Right.

 TOBY
I've got a Ronaldo top.

 HARRY
Right.

 TOBY
Don't you like football?

 HARRY
It's all right, I dunno. I'm not that
interested.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

 TOBY
I'm not allowed to play. Not properly.
Because of my asthma.

 HARRY
Right.

 TOBY
What's Mr. Perkins like?

 HARRY
What?

 TOBY
Our form teacher? Is he nice?

 HARRY
I dunno, yeah, he's all right.

 TOBY
Can I sit next to you at lunch?

Pause

 HARRY
Well it's, you know, whoever... get's
there. I'm on packed lunches.

 TOBY
Me too. Where do you eat them?

 HARRY
Well... wherever. There's some benches
round the back of B Block.

 TOBY
Shall I see you there, then? Is that
where you'll go today?

 HARRY
It's sort of... if... it depends... I
suppose. Probably.

 TOBY
Round the back of B Block.

Pause

 HARRY
Yes.

 TOBY
I'll see you there.

*He exits. Pause. Harry exits. Playground underscore. Kids move
to and fro. Janie and Izzy enter.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANIE

Perhaps you've got a speech defect.

IZZY

I haven't.

JANIE

Or perhaps you talk privately to a secret friend no one can see.

IZZY

I haven't got a secret friend.

Toby enters.

JANIE

Hello.

TOBY

Hello.

JANIE

Did you find the office?

TOBY

Eventually.

JANIE

What year are you in?

TOBY

Year nine.

JANIE

You look too small for year nine.

IZZY

(to Janie)

You can talk. You look too small for this whole school.

JANIE

No I don't.

IZZY

Do too-

JANIE

I don't!-

TOBY

Where's B block?

JANIE

What?

TOBY

Where's B Block?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANIE

Next to A Block. You know, like the alphabet. A, then B, then C-

TOBY

Yeah, all right.

JANIE

Are you on packed lunches?

TOBY

Yes.

JANIE

That's where you eat them. Round the back.

TOBY

I know.

IZZY

We're on packed lunches.

TOBY

Right.

IZZY

Shall we see you there, then?

TOBY

I'm just waiting for Harry.

JANIE

Suit yourself.

SCENE 3

Scene reset for derelict class-room. Annie enters.

ANNIE

Sometimes, our lives just stop. Something happens to us. We get hurt, our bodies or our minds or both. Something happens to us that we wish never did.

Masked figures enter (Tilda, Nina, Gemma, Keeley, Holly), with one girl (Lisa) without a mask.

ANNIE (cont'd)

Look at this girl. In the gym. She hates the gym. She needs the loo, she's desperate, but she's scared of the teacher. She's scared of everything, she's always been scared, she can't help it. She's too scared to ask. Look what happens to her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Children move apart from Lisa, leaving her alone in a semi-circle. There is a pool at her feet.

TILDA

Miss! Miss! Lisa's done a wee.

NINA

She's wet herself, Miss.

GEMMA

It's a bit smelly, Miss. Should one of us get a bucket of water, Miss?

KEELELY

Should one of us go to Mrs. Hislop's office, Miss?

HOLLY

Should one of us get some spare pants, Miss, from the lost property cupboard, Miss, cos her pants will be all wet now, won't they, Miss?

GEMMA

She might get a chill, mightn't she, Miss, with wet pants on.

HOLLY

She shouldn't be allowed to stand around, should she, Miss. Not in wet pants.

TILDA

Should I go with Holly, Miss, to Mrs. Hislop's office, to fetch some spare pants, Miss?

ANNIE

Look at her face. Like it's frozen. This face, this expression, it'll always be here. The lines and wrinkles that she has when she's older will be carved out of this face.

Lisa's mask gets put on.

ANNIE (cont'd)

Every time she meets someone, and they look at her face, they won't know it, but they'll be looking at a little girl in the gym, standing in her own wee, they'll be looking at that moment, that point when her face got stuck. That point of no return. She'll always be here, no matter how far away she goes.

SCENE 4

Toby enters alone. Playground underscore. He sits down on a bench, looking around him. He opens a tupperware box, and starts eating a sandwich. Older kids appear in the back-ground with clown masks on. We hear snatches of dialogue about Buzz, spacers, laughter etc. Toby turns round. The older kids turn like-wise, except one in the middle. She takes her mask off. It's Young Misha.

YOUNG MISHA

Hello Buzz. You enjoying your lunch?

Toby turns round, packs up his tupperware and leaves. Laughter follows him. Janie and Izzy enter.

IZZY

He said he was going to be here. The new boy.

JANIE

Perhaps he got lost.

SCENE 5

In toilets. Sound of loo flushing. Young Misha stands facing audience putting make-up on. Young Jade, Young Leanne and Young Jess watch.

YOUNG JESS

Where were you before here? Which school?

YOUNG MISHA

That would be telling.

YOUNG LEANNE

Was it near here?

YOUNG MISHA

Why do you want to know?

YOUNG LEANNE

Just asking.

Pause

YOUNG JESS

Haven't you already got make-up on?

YOUNG MISHA

So?

YOUNG JESS

You know you're not allowed? It's a school rule.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

YOUNG MISHA

Is it?

YOUNG JESS

You've got loads on.

YOUNG MISHA

Have I?

YOUNG JESS

Why are you putting more on?

YOUNG MISHA

Are you the fashion police? I want to.

YOUNG LEANNE

Dog-breath'll get you. He'll see. He's like a Nazi when it comes to make-up. He'll make you take it off again.

YOUNG MISHA

So?

YOUNG LEANNE

He'll send a letter. You'll get grief.

YOUNG MISHA

No I won't.

YOUNG LEANNE

Don't your parents mind? If they get a letter? My parents would go ape.

YOUNG MISHA

Would they?

YOUNG JESS

Wouldn't yours?

YOUNG MISHA

Couldn't say.

YOUNG JESS

Really? Wouldn't they say anything? Wouldn't they ground you?

Pause

YOUNG MISHA

I haven't got parents.

(finishing her make-up)

There. What do you think? Am I gorgeous, or am I gorgeous?

Pause

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

YOUNG MISHA (cont'd)
(to Jade)
You should put some make-up on.

YOUNG JADE
I haven't got any.

YOUNG MISHA
Borrow mine.

YOUNG JADE
Really?

YOUNG MISHA
I've got loads.

YOUNG JESS
You'll get into trouble.

YOUNG MISHA
Does that worry you?

YOUNG JESS
Well-

YOUNG MISHA
It's fun, getting into trouble.

YOUNG JESS
What? What do you mean?

YOUNG MISHA
It's like being, I don't know, in a film, or on telly. Everybody's looking at you. That's why you've got to look your best. Here, go on. Start with your eyes.

YOUNG JESS
Jade, you shouldn't-

YOUNG MISHA
Are you her mother? Why don't you let her make her own decisions?

Pause.

YOUNG MISHA (cont'd)
That boy won't be able to keep his eyes off you.

YOUNG JADE
What boy?

YOUNG MISHA
The one that keeps staring at you. The one that wanted to meet you. What's his name?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

YOUNG JESS

Harry.

YOUNG MISHA

Harry. He's obsessed. You can tell.
You've just got to look at him.

YOUNG JADE

He's not obsessed.

YOUNG MISHA

He so is. It's sweet. They're funny at
that age.

YOUNG LEANNE

He's all right. He's the nicest one of
the lot.

YOUNG JADE

He doesn't like me. Does he?

YOUNG LEANNE

Of course he does.

YOUNG MISHA

Do you like him?

YOUNG JADE

I don't know. He's all right.

YOUNG MISHA

He's a boy, though, isn't he. You don't
want to waste your time with little
boys, like him. He's just a school-boy.
You want someone a bit older. Someone
with a bit more style. That's what the
make-up's for.

Jade takes the make-up off her.

YOUNG MISHA (cont'd)

You should come out with me. On the
weekend.

YOUNG JESS

We're going to the cinema on Saturday-

YOUNG MISHA

I'm not talking about the cinema.

(to Jess)

You go to the cinema, if you want.

YOUNG JESS

But we've got it all planned, my Dad's
giving us a lift-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

YOUNG MISHA

Will you go to Burgerking after?

YOUNG JESS

Wh... I... I don't know-

YOUNG MISHA

Sounds like a lovely day out.

YOUNG JADE

Where are you going?

YOUNG MISHA

Nowhere your Dad would know about. A club. I know the doorman. You can come if you like. Or you can watch a p.g. film and eat a chicken-burger. It's up to you.

(looking at Young Jade)

That's more like it. Put more on the eye-lashes. Keep it, I've got loads. That's better. You look like a proper lady. Go on. Check yourself out.

Young Misha leaves. Young Jade looks at the others.

YOUNG JESS

I don't believe she's got no parents.

YOUNG JADE

Why not? Why would she lie?

YOUNG JESS

I don't know... the way she said it. She didn't even seem bothered. Are you going to go out like that?

YOUNG JADE

It's only make-up.

YOUNG LEANNE

What about Dog-breath?

YOUNG JADE

Misha wasn't scared, was she? Anyway, it's not fair we shouldn't be allowed to put make-up on. It's not like we're little kids anymore.

YOUNG JESS

But you look...

YOUNG JADE

What?

Pause

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

YOUNG JESS

Nothing. It doesn't matter.

SCENE 6

Loud thumping music starts up. She holds the make-up up. Jade appears, taking the make-up in the same pose, and replaces young Jade, who leaves. Jess and Leanne enter and do the same.

JESS

Jade!

JADE

What?

JESS

Have you seen Misha? Have you seen what she's doing?

JADE

What's she doing?

LEANNE

She's outside with that man. The one that was talking to her.

JADE

Where's Dean and the others?

JESS

Dancing.

JADE

(to Leanne)

What's up with Jess?

LEANNE

She's drunk too much.

JADE

How much?

JESS

I feel a bit sick.

JADE

How much have you had?

JESS

I can't remember.

LEANNE

We've had loads.

JADE

You can't take it. You need to practise more. Let's get you outside.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JESS

Misha said she wants to break into the school. Later on.

JADE

It's all boarded up.

JESS

She wants to have a party there.

JADE

How would we get in? It's padlocked. They're pulling it down, aren't they? There's a security fence all round it.

LEANNE

She said she's got a key.

JADE

But she's gone off with that man, hasn't she?

LEANNE

She said to wait for her outside.

JADE

Why does she want to break into school? She always hated school.

JESS

I don't know, I don't feel well.

JADE

Come on. We better find Misha.

SCENE 7

Stage reset for class-room. Toby on his own. Harry enters.

TOBY

Hi, Harry.

HARRY

All right.

TOBY

What've you been doing?

HARRY

Football.

TOBY

I thought you didn't like football. You said-

HARRY

I changed my mind.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOBY

I can't play, I'm not allowed-

HARRY

I know, you said.

TOBY

Where did you have lunch? You weren't round the back of B Block.

HARRY

No. I... I didn't have time in the end.

Young Jade enters wearing make-up. Young Jess follows her and sits down alone.

HARRY (cont'd)

Hi Jade.

YOUNG JADE

Hello.

HARRY

You've put... you've got... you look... older.

YOUNG JADE

Do I?

Pause

HARRY

Are you... um... this weekend-

YOUNG JADE

I'm going to a club.

HARRY

A club?

Young Misha enters.

YOUNG JADE

With Misha.

YOUNG MISHA

With me.

HARRY

But you're not old enough.

YOUNG MISHA

It's how old you *look* that matters. You just said she looks older. Didn't you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOBY

(to Harry)

You can come round to mine. On Saturday. If you want.

HARRY

I'll... I'll... probably go to the park.

TOBY

I could go there too.

HARRY

For football, there'll be football-

TOBY

I could watch.

HARRY

Whatever.

YOUNG MISHA

(to Toby)

You can't play football, can you. Cos of your asthma.

TOBY

No.

YOUNG MISHA

Won't you get bored just watching?

TOBY

I don't mind.

YOUNG MISHA

(to Harry)

That's not fair on him, is it. You shouldn't let your friend stand around, getting bored, should you. He'll get cold, watching you play football. He's only little. You should go round to his, shouldn't he, Jade. I'm sure he's got a play-station, have you got a play-station, Buzz?

TOBY

Yes.

YOUNG MISHA

There you are, Harry. He's got a play-station.

The rest of the class enter.

YOUNG DEAN

What's going on? All right, Buzz?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

YOUNG MISHA

We were talking about his space-
station.

YOUNG DEAN

What?

TOBY

My play-station.

YOUNG MISHA

That's right, his space-station.

TOBY

Stop it.

YOUNG MISHA

Stop what?

TOBY

Stop teasing me.

YOUNG MISHA

Who's teasing you?

LEE

Calm down, Buzz.

YOUNG MENTAL

Buzzy-boy.

TOBY

Stop calling me Buzz.

YOUNG CARL

But it's your name.

TOBY

My name's Toby.

MISHA

I think Buzz is a better name. More
exciting.

YOUNG DEAN

It's way better.

YOUNG MENTAL

Buzz is the best!

TOBY

You just think you're being funny.

YOUNG CARL

It's sort of a matter of perspective.

TOBY

It isn't. You're all just being stupid.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

YOUNG CARL

That's not kind, is it? That's not a kind thing to say.

Pause

TOBY

My name's Toby. It's *Toby*.

Pause

MISHA

Relax, Buzz, it's just a bit of fun.

Toby runs out. Pause.

ELLA

Should someone go after him?

KEELEY

Are you being a goody-goody again?

ELLA

I'm not a goody-goody, I just-

YOUNG MISHA

You can go after him if you want. No one's stopping you.

KEELEY

Go on, Ella.

IMOGEN

(to Ella)

Maybe you should go out with him. You're quite well suited.

ELLA

What do you mean?

IMOGEN

(to the others)

Do you think Ella's in love with Buzz.

YOUNG MENTAL

Fuzzy-buzzy!

ELLA

I'm just saying we shouldn't bully people.

YOUNG CARL

That's a very beautiful thing to say.

IMOGEN

No one's bullying anyone-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KEELEY

Who's bullying?

IMOGEN

It's not our fault if he can't take a joke.

ELLA

He didn't think it was a joke.

KEELEY

That's his problem. He's got to lighten up.

IMOGEN

We can all take a joke, can't we. Why can't he? You can take a joke, can't you, Ella? It's important to have a sense of humour, isn't it, Ella.

ELLA

You know, sometimes you're really boring.

IMOGEN

Now you're being mean to me!

(to the others)

She was just being mean to me!

HOLLY

Shut up, Imogen.

IMOGEN

Are you on her side?

HOLLY

I'm not on anybody's side.

IMOGEN

Why did you tell me to shut up, then?

LEE

Harry should go after him.

HARRY

Why? Why me?

LEE

You're his friend.

HARRY

No, I'm not. I don't even know him. How can I be his friend?

MISHA

Are you ashamed of being his friend?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HARRY
I'm not his friend.

Pause

MISHA
Course you aren't.

SCENE 8

We hear the beginning of "I get a kick out of you". The children stand up, put on clown masks and do a dance routine around Toby, joined by older kids, in which Toby gets pushed around and "kicked". At the end of the routine Toby is left on his own on a bench, disshevelled, with a nose-bleed.